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ABSTRACT

This collection of nine leaflets from the National Program for Playground Safety addresses the active role parents and other adults should take in ensuring playground safety for children. Four leaflets, each focusing on a topic related to a letter in the word "safe," provide suggestions to ensure playground safety. Leaflet "S," "Supervision Means...," covers being alert and attentive, being aware of age-appropriate equipment, evaluating hazards, observing signs, knowing safe playground rules, intervening when inappropriate behavior occurs, ensuring safe children's clothing, and being prepared. Leaflet "A," "All Children Should Play on Age-Appropriate Equipment," covers the following areas: (1) playground equipment that fosters appropriate physical development and is scaled accordingly; (2) playgrounds that help ensure positive emotional, social, and intellectual development; (3) play areas that provide accessibility and play opportunities for all children; and (4) examples of age-appropriate equipment. Leaflet "F," "Falls to Surface Should Be Cushioned," discusses why cushioned surfacing is needed, appropriate surfaces, where surfaces should be placed, maintenance needs, surfaces to increase accessibility, and how to determine how much loose-fill surfacing is needed. Leaflet "E," "Equipment Should Be Safe," discusses what a safe playground should look like, types of needed routine maintenance, and other safety measures to check on a regular basis. Three additional leaflets provide a list of resources available from the National Program for Playground Safety, a playground inspection guide for parents, and tips for playground fundraising. Finally, a 4-page brochure discusses 23 steps in planning a play area for children. (EV)

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ED 427 851

[SAFE: Making Your Children Safer on Public Playgrounds.]

Working to Make America's Playgrounds Safe
Supervision Means...
All Children Should Play on Age Appropriate Equipment
Falls to Surface Should be Cushioned
Equipment Should be Safe
Safe Playgrounds
Inspection Guide for Parents
Tips for Playground Fundraising
Planning a Play Area for Children

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Director
An acknowledged national and international expert in the field of playground development and safety, Dr. Thompson has over 20 years' experience teaching, writing and researching about playgrounds. Dr. Thompson holds a National Playground Safety Inspector's certification and has numerous presentations on playground development, including an interview on ABC television's *Good Morning, America*. She has served as a consultant for numerous groups planning playgrounds, and has been an expert witness on playground safety. Dr. Thompson is recognized by early childhood educators, physical educators, elementary principals, park and recreation professionals and parents for her knowledge and expertise in playground safety.

Susan Hudson, Ph.D.
Project Associate
A certified leisure professional and playground safety inspector, Dr. Hudson is also an acknowledged expert nationally in the area of playground safety. She has made presentations both nationally and internationally on playground design and safety, and is the author of several articles on playground design. Dr. Hudson has held numerous leadership and committee assignments in national professional organizations, including the American Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance and the National Recreation and Park Association.

Mick Mack, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator
As a teacher and coach for 15 years, Dr. Mack has dealt with playground safety from a practical point of view. He is the resident statistical analyst and is responsible for gathering, analyzing and presenting information about surface materials under playground equipment. Dr. Mack is a member of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance and is listed in *Who's Who Among America's Teachers*.

Additional Resources

The National Program for Playground Safety is part of the College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa. For additional information and resources about playground safety, contact NPPS at the following addresses:

National Program for Playground Safety
School of HPELS
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0618

800-554-PLAY
Fax: 319/273-7308
e-mail: playground-safety@uni.edu
www.uni.edu/playground

For a copy of the Handbook for Public Playground Safety or to report a product hazard or product-related injury, contact the:
United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)
Washington, DC 20207
800-638-2772
http://www.cpsc.gov

The National Program for Playground Safety
America's playgrounds
Make them safe

This publication was supported by Grant Number UC7/CCU712119-01 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the National Program for Playground Safety and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

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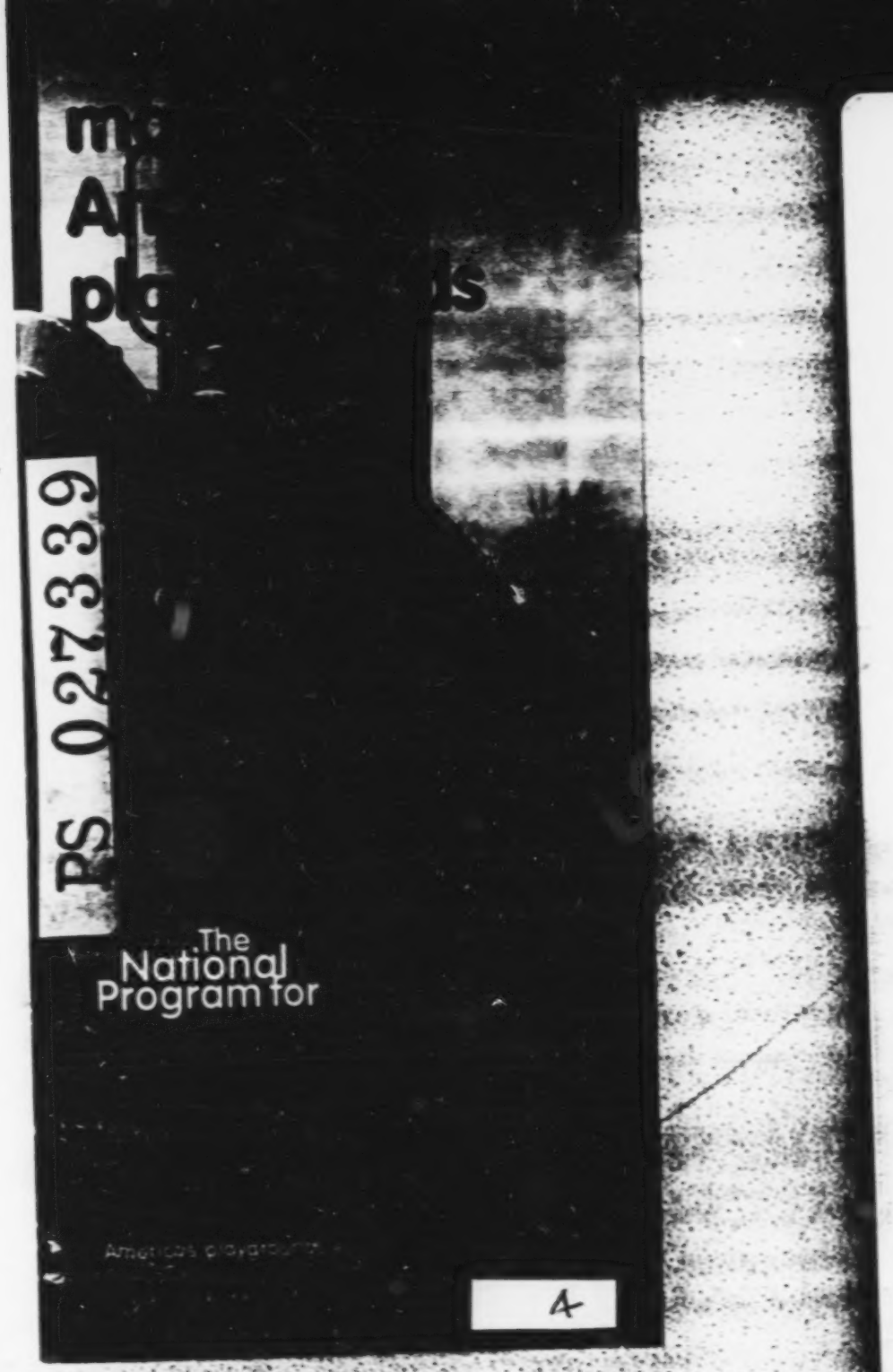

America's youth have long enjoyed the benefits of public playgrounds. The challenges found on a playground are a great asset for the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of the children at play. Many of today's adults remember hours of fun and adventure spent on the playgrounds of their childhood. But, all too often these memories are mixed with pain.

During the past two decades, CPSC statistics* have shown a dramatic increase in playground-related injuries. It's estimated that every two-and-a-half minutes a child is treated in an emergency room for a playground-related injuries. This does not include the children whose injuries receive treatment outside the emergency room. Clearly, efforts are needed to insure safer play environments for the children on our nation's playgrounds.

In 1995 the University of Northern Iowa established the **National Program for Playground Safety** (NPPS) under a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. Through its efforts to help address America's playground safety issues, NPPS hopes to see a decline in the nearly 200,000 annual playground-related injuries suffered by America's youth.

National Program for Playground Safety

Since its beginning in October 1995, the National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS) has taken an active part in injury prevention. In this role it...

- Promotes the "National Action Plan for the Prevention of Playground Injuries;"
- Serves as a recognized national clearinghouse for playground safety information;
- Shares cutting-edge information as a global resource through its World Wide Web page: www.uni.edu/playground;
- Conducts on-going research in the area of injury prevention;
- Houses the largest compilation of playground-related publications and documents in the nation;
- Sponsors an annual National Playground Safety Day;
- Produces educational videos addressing the roles of various audiences in injury prevention;
- Prevents countless playground-related injuries by serving as a technical resource for parent groups, schools, communities, child care centers, government officials, children's organizations and other educators.

**Statistics are based on the US Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). NEISS collects only playground-related injuries that are recorded in more than 90 hospital emergency room departments located in the US. Thus, only emergency room injuries are recorded, and the national statistics are estimates.*

Program Services

Both professionals and the public have direct access to an on-going array of program services. Some of these include:

- An inter-library loan service of publications and documents from the University of Northern Iowa's Rod Library;
- A national information hotline (1-800-554-PLAY) about playground injury prevention;
- Pamphlets, brochures and other resource materials for use by service clubs, organizations and agencies;
- In-depth educational opportunities through the National Playground Safety School and workshops;
- A network of professionals to contact to provide specific information to local communities around the country.

Available Resources

- S-A-F-E Brochure Series: A set of four pamphlets outlining important points about: **S**upervision, **A**ge-appropriate equipment, **F**alls to surface and **E**quipment Maintenance.
- **National Action Plan**: A blueprint for playground safety on the National, State and Local levels.
- **Selected Annotated Bibliography**: A compilation of latest books and articles dealing with playground safety
- **Playground Safety Handbook**: A study guide of issues relating to playground safety.
- **ABCs of Supervision** (VHS, 13 min.) An overview of playground safety practices for adult supervisors
- **Sammy's Playground Pointers** (VHS, 14 min.) A child's guide to safe playground practices
- **America's Playgrounds - Keep Them Safe!** (VHS, 18 min.) An overview of the National Program for Playground Safety and the National Action Plan.

...Ensuring Safe Children's Clothing.

- Do not permit clothing to have attached strings, these have caught in equipment and caused strangulation.
- Do not allow children on the equipment if their clothing cannot first be made safe.
- Be sure skid resistant shoes that offer protection from foreign objects (glass, nails, pop tops, etc.) are worn on outdoor playgrounds.

...Being Prepared.

- Keep a first aid kit stocked and easily available in case an injury occurs.
- When visiting a community park, put a basic first aid kit in the car.
- Ask another adult to watch the play area while attending to an injured child.

Effective supervision is an important part of keeping children safe on the playground. Each year, many needless injuries occur because of inadequate supervision. Help educate other adult supervisors of the important part they play in creating a safe play environment for the children.

The National Program for Playground Safety

America's playgrounds
Make them safe

The National Program for Playground Safety is housed at the University of Northern Iowa. For additional information about playground safety, contact the National Program for Playground Safety at the following addresses:

National Program for Playground Safety
School of Health, Physical Education
and Leisure Services
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0618

800/554-PLAY (7529)
319/273- PLAY (7529)
Fax: 319/273-7308
e-mail: playground-safety@uni.edu

World Wide Web:
http://www.uni.edu/playground

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The National Program for Playground Safety

America's playgrounds
Make them safe

The local playground is a fun-filled, memory provoking place for both parents and children. However, with the dramatic increase in playground-related injuries over the past two decades, it is also a place that requires adult supervision. United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) statistics estimate nearly 200,000 playground-related injuries occur each year that require emergency room visits. Nearly 40 percent of those injuries are related to inadequate supervision.

The National Program for Playground Safety highly recommends parents and adults take an active role in playground supervision. The following tips offer key points to remember when supervising children on playgrounds at schools, child-care centers and community parks.

Supervision Means...

...Being Alert and Attentive.

- Move through the playground area; stationary persons only help children nearest to them.
- Observe all children and the "secret" places where they could hide.
- Realize a child can wander into a hazardous situation in less than a minute.
- Direct eye contact with a child can help prevent inappropriate behavior.

...Being Aware of Age Appropriate Equipment.

- Equipment should reflect the physical, social, emotional and intellectual differences of its planned users.
- Not all playground equipment is appropriate for all ages of children; playground equipment play areas should be separated for children ages 2-5, and ages 5-12.
- If equipment is not labeled for specific ages, direct children to equipment appropriate to their ages and development.

...Evaluating Hazards.

- Evaluate the playground for potential hazards that could cause serious or fatal injuries to children.
- Be aware of foreign objects such as glass, nails, and pop tops that are hard to see.
- Watch for hazards like loose or protruding nuts or bolts, broken parts, exposed concrete, and shallow protective surfacing that occur through the children's regular use of equipment.
- Report potential hazards to the playground's chief administrator (principal, director, etc.), both verbally and in writing, so they can be fixed quickly. ***Follow up*** to be sure action is taken.

...Observing Signs.

- Watch for signs that inform supervisors which areas are designated for children ages 2-5 and 5-12.
- Look for signs that educate adults and children about safe playground behavior.
- Notice signs placed on vertical equipment posts that indicate the level of loose surfacing material needed to conform to recommended standards. If surface material does not reach the line, maintenance is required.

...Knowing Safe Playground Rules.

- Teach children there are rules to be followed on the playground.
- Ask school age children to help create rules.
- Agree on rules before children are allowed on equipment to prevent confrontations on the playground.
- Realize school age children can remember up to five rules, while preschoolers should have only three or less.

...Intervening When Inappropriate Behavior Occurs.

- Verbally warn children about inappropriate behavior; intervene between fighting children immediately to prevent someone from being hurt.
- Be firm and consistent when enforcing rules; pushing, throwing objects, and hitting other children can lead to serious injury.
- Be sure a playground administrator endorses the supervisor's authority and follows up with appropriate action.
- Reinforce safe playground behavior on public playgrounds by following through with appropriate measures.

Resources:

American Assoc. of Leisure and Recreation (AALR)
1900 Association Dr.
Reston, VA 22091
800-213-7193
http://www.aahperd.org/aalr/aalr.html

For copies of *Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use Standard F1487-95* contact:
ASTM
100 Barr Harbor Dr.
West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959
610-832-9555
http://www.astm.org/index.html

For copies of the *CPSC Handbook for Public Playground Safety* contact:
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)
Washington, DC 20207
800-638-2772
http://www.cpsc.gov

For more information on playground safety and additional resources, contact:
National Program for Playground Safety
School of HPELS
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0178
800-554-PLAY
http://www.uni.edu/playground

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making your children safer on public playgrounds

The National Program for Playground Safety

America's playgrounds
Make them safe

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Child development experts and parents agree: play is an essential part of childhood. Playgrounds can help children develop physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually.

Since the 1930's, thousands of playgrounds have been built to provide safe, secure areas of play for children to develop and just "have fun." But how safe are our children? According to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) statistics, nearly 200,000 playground-related injuries requiring emergency room visits occur each year. Approximately 150,000 of those injuries occur on public playgrounds.

A key to many of those injuries is the fact that numerous children are playing on equipment not designed for their age. Thus, the steps or railings may be too far apart or require additional strength and coordination causing children to fall or trip. According to CPSC statistics, approximately 10,720 children ages 0-4 are hurt on climbers and monkey bars each year and 35 percent of all injuries to children hurt on seesaws are to children ages 0-4.*

Most injuries related to age inappropriateness involve children ages 0-4 playing on equipment designed for children ages 5-12. However, older children should not play on equipment designed for younger children. Equipment that is too small may not be developmentally challenging and may create hazards by having small steps or narrow spaces.

The National Program for Playground Safety recommends that parents be proactive in selecting age appropriate equipment and requesting separate play areas for different age groups — ages 2 to 5 and 5 to 12. *Parents and other interested adults are not expected to become trained playground equipment inspectors, but they can review equipment to be sure that it is appropriately designed for the age levels and needs of the children using the equipment.*

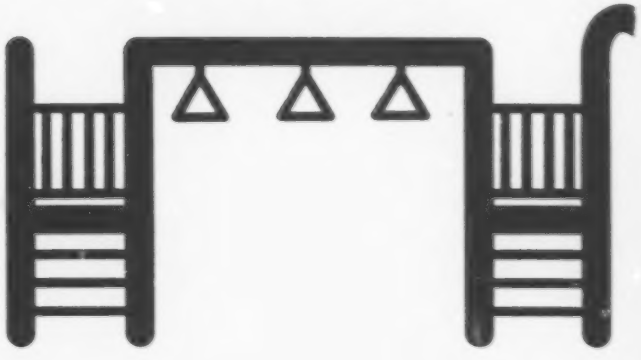
Please consider the following factors when selecting age-appropriate equipment in order to help make America's playgrounds safer.

Playground equipment should foster appropriate physical development and be scaled accordingly

Children are developmentally different in size and ability. Most children ages 2-5 are smaller, weaker, less coordinated and have a higher center of gravity than 5-12 year olds. Thus, they need smaller steps and crawl spaces. Hands require smaller grips and bodies require appropriately placed railings on platforms. On the whole, playground equipment for 2-5 year olds should be designed lower to the ground.

Keep in mind, playgrounds should physically challenge all children. Older children should be encouraged to use overhead and horizontal bars because they have greater arm development and strength. However, the same pieces are not appropriate for 2-5 year olds.

Remember for all children on all equipment, there should be no spaces 3.1/2" to 9" where heads or bodies could become trapped.



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Playgrounds also can facilitate other areas of physical development. They can stimulate senses with different textures and contrasts in color. They can help develop dynamic balance by providing smaller children with small ramps or steps and school-aged children with rope and chain ladders, bridges and balance beams.

Appropriate play areas for children ages 2-5 could include: areas to crawl; low platforms with multiple access such as ramps and ladders; ramps with pieces attached for grasping; low tables for sand, water and manipulation of materials; tricycle paths with various textures; flexible spring rockers; sand areas with covers; and shorter slides (usually no taller than 4').

Developmentally appropriate play areas for children ages 5-12 could include: rope or chain climbers on angles; climbing pieces; horizontal bars; cooperative pieces such as tire swings, merry-go-rounds, see-saws; slides and sliding poles; open spaces to run and play ball; and semi-enclosed structures to promote fantasy play and socializing.

Playgrounds should help ensure positive emotional development

Under good supervision, well-designed and appropriately-used playgrounds can help create positive emotional development for children. Equipment such as appropriately-sized slides and swings encourage children to experiment and stretch their bodies and emotions to new limits. Appropriately designed playgrounds allow younger children to explore new methods of playing and to take qualified risks. Parents can help nurture positive emotional development by observing, supervising, facilitating and complimenting, but not directly interfering unless there is a safety problem.

Playground equipment should help provide social development

Playgrounds may be one of the first social experiences for some children. Good play areas offer children opportunities to play alone or with other children. The playground should allow younger children to easily manipulate items, explore spaces and begin to interact with others. Suggested equipment for play areas for children ages 2-5 should offer both single and multi-child use. Appropriate equipment may be single-use equipment such as spring rocking animals or tot swings and more social pieces such as multi-user spring rockers, sand boxes or age-appropriate slides.

Playgrounds for school-aged children should continue to encourage social growth with equipment for single and multi-users such as swings, slides, and climbers. Some equipment for 5-12 year olds should encourage cooperation. Examples could include tire swings, merry-go-rounds, seesaws and special manipulative equipment that requires more than one user.

Individual pieces of equipment (with the exception of swings that need to be located away from high traffic areas) often can be placed adjacent to one another or attached to other pieces. Close proximity encourages children to move from piece to piece and gives them opportunities to interact.

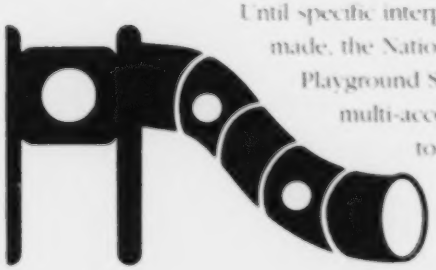
Children of all ages can develop social skills by working together to maintain their play areas. Tricycles, and other loose equipment should be used and placed in designated areas. Children can help pick up trash and push into place loose-fill surfaces such as sand, pea gravel and wood chips that has been displaced by use.

Play areas should provide intellectual development

Playgrounds are a fun way for children to develop intellectually. Playgrounds offer opportunities to learn problem solving skills, to explore, to manipulate items, and to discover new ways to get off and on equipment. Exploration areas include nature trails, large composite structures and play houses. Manipulative equipment include sand boxes, sand diggers, water-wheels, merry-go-rounds, construction materials and special items that turn. Age-appropriate areas offer younger children smaller, safer and more secure methods of getting off and on the equipment like slides, steps or slight ramps. School-age children should have more advanced methods of getting off equipment like poles, horizontal ladders or flexible bridges to challenge their problem solving abilities.

Play areas should provide accessibility and play opportunities for all children

With the 1991 passage of the American with Disabilities Act, many play areas are being planned or modified to give children with disabilities an opportunity to play on play equipment with other children. Currently, the Recreation Advisory Committee of the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board is working on interpretations of how ADA will effect playground equipment. Until specific interpretations are made, the National Program for Playground Safety encourages multi-access to play areas to accommodate users' needs. Play areas should offer some stable paths paved with wood fiber, rubber mats or other accessible material to access wheelchairs. Transfer stations on equipment will aid physically-challenged children to get off and on equipment. Five-foot wide paths, wheelchair parking spaces adjacent to the play structures, wider platforms and walkways will help children using wheelchairs. Using different textures and colors for paths and hand rails can help visually-impaired children.



Examples of age-appropriate equipment.**

Ages 2-5	Ages 5-12
Activity panels	Swings
Swings	Tire swings
Tot swings	Spiral slides
Small slides	Horizontal ladders
Lower platforms	Chain and net climbers
Spring rocking equipment	Free standing arch climbers
Sand/water tables	Sliding poles
Crawl tunnels	Merry-go-rounds
Playhouses	See-saws
	Track gliders

*This information was compiled by the National Program for Playground Safety, University of Northern Iowa (1996, statistics submitted for publication). All statistics are based on data obtained from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). NEISS collects only playground product-related injuries that are recorded in more than 90 hospital emergency departments located throughout the U.S. Thus, only emergency room injuries are recorded, and the national statistics are estimates.

** This chart is for consideration only, it is not an extensive list.

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Resources:

For copies of ASTM surface attenuation standard F1292-95, contact:
ASTM
100 Barr Harbor Dr.
West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959
610-832-9585
http://www.astm.org/index.html

For copies of the *CPSC Handbook for Playground Safety*, contact:
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making your children safer on public playgrounds

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Many playground memories evoke a sense of accomplishment in taking our minds and bodies to new limits. How high did the swing go? How far did we climb? How many times did we cross the monkey bars without falling?

Most of us want those same challenges and memories for our children. However, parents and educators need to remember that pushing the body to limits also can create falls and injuries.

According to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) statistics, nearly 200,000 playground injuries requiring emergency room visits occur each year. About 150,000 of those injuries occur on public playgrounds such as parks, schools, child care centers and restaurants.

Statistics indicate that nearly 70 percent of all playground injuries are related to falls to the surface. Recent studies also have found that about 80 percent of playgrounds have unsuitable surfaces.

Thus, an important aspect of reducing playground injuries is to provide cushioned surfaces beneath and around equipment at depths appropriate to equipment height. Surfaces such as asphalt, cement, dirt, grass, and rocks are not acceptable surfaces.

The National Program for Playground Safety strongly recommends that parents and other adults become proactive regarding the provision of appropriate surfaces at adequate depths. *Parents and other adults are not expected to become certified playground inspectors, but they can visually inspect the surfaces for any safety problems and be sure that children do not play on unsafe surfaces.*

Why is cushioned surfacing needed on playgrounds?

Falls to the surface are the leading cause of injuries on playgrounds. Approximately 106,000 of all public playground injuries and several deaths each year are related to falls to surfaces.* However, shock absorbing surfaces can help disperse the momentum of a falling body or head, thus, reducing the risk of life threatening injuries.

The National Program for Playground Safety, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and other organizations highly recommend the use of various loose-fill materials such as pea gravel and wood fiber as well as synthetic surfaces that tend to be shock absorbing. Surfaces such as asphalt, cement, dirt, grass, and rocks should not be used unless they are being utilized as the base for other appropriate shock absorbing surfaces.

CPSC has established recommendations for appropriate surfacing based on their own testing. One of CPSC's main points states, the more shock absorbing a surface can be made, the more likely it is to reduce injuries. "However, it should be recognized that all injuries due to falls cannot be prevented no matter what playground surfacing material is used."

What are appropriate surfaces for playgrounds?

There are no perfect playground surfaces. Playground safety experts highly recommend the use of various loose-fill or synthetic surface materials. The selection of cushioned surfacing varies from playground to playground. Purchasers need to ask the following questions. Does it meet American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM) standards and CPSC guidelines? Does it have a proven track record in similar

climates? Is it readily available? What are initial and maintenance costs? Will it meet the playground's needs as far as durability, drainage and accessibility?

Acceptable loose-fill materials include hardwood fiber chips or mulch, pea gravel, sand and shredded rubber. Recommended synthetic surfaces include rubber tiles, rubber mats or synthetic poured surfaces.

Loose-fill surfaces should be maintained to a depth proportionate to the height of the equipment. However, a 12-inch depth is a good guideline for equipment up to 8 feet in height.

Manufacturers should provide testing results to indicate appropriate depth of synthetic materials. Be sure to check CPSC guidelines and ASTM standard F1292-95 to make sure the manufacturers testing information is in compliance with recommendations.

Surfaces and surface depths are recommended based on critical height of surfacing materials. CPSC and ASTM testing indicates that consumers should look for surfacing that has a critical height with "peak deceleration of no more than 200 G's (acceleration due to gravity) and a HIC (head injury criteria) of no more than 1,000 when tested in accordance with the procedure described in ASTM F1292." Thus, keep in mind, to try to prevent concussions and more severe injuries surfacing should have no more than 200 G's and a HIC of no more than 1,000.

Where should cushioned surfacing be placed?

Cushioned surfaces should be placed in all playground fall zones. Fall zones are defined as the area under and around playground equipment where children may fall. The total surfacing space is dependent on the type of equipment at the playground. In general, the surface should extend a minimum of 6 feet in all directions from the edge of stationary playground equipment. Because of the momentum of children playing on slides and swings, different calculations for those fall zones need to be made.

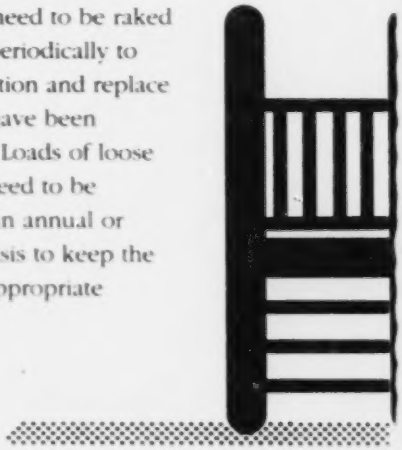
The fall zone for slides higher than 4' can be determined by adding 4' to the height of the slide. For example, a 6' slide should have 10' of surfacing extending beyond the exit of the slide. The maximum amount of surfacing for the end of any slide is 14'.

Fall zones for swings is twice the height of the pivot or swing hanger in front and in back of the swing seats. For example, if the hanger pivot height is 10 feet, the fall zone must be 20 feet in front and 20 feet in back of the stationary swing seat. Surfacing should also extend six feet to each side of the support structures.

What maintenance needs do surfacing materials have?

Maintenance costs and needs of surfacing materials vary. Loose-fill surfacing materials such as wood chips, sand, pea gravel and shredded rubber have a lower initial cost, but tend to have higher maintenance needs.

In high-use areas, loose materials may need to be raked daily or tilled periodically to loosen compaction and replace materials that have been pushed away. Loads of loose material may need to be trucked in on an annual or semi-annual basis to keep the surface at an appropriate depth.



Loose-fill materials also need to be inspected for protruding and sharp objects such as glass, can tops, sharp rocks or metal objects.

Synthetic materials such as rubber mats, tiles and pour-in-place also have maintenance needs. Repairs may need to be made to gouges, burns and loose areas. Synthetic materials also may need to be swept frequently to prevent sand, dirt, rocks or other loose materials from becoming a slipping hazard.

All surfacing material should provide good drainage. Drainage problems can cause inaccessibility and slipping hazards.

What are acceptable surfaces for playground access?

New surface materials are being developed daily to help meet accessibility needs for disabled persons. Currently, the most generally accepted surfaces for wheelchair accessibility are uniform wood chips, and synthetic products such as rubber mats or tiles and poured-in-place surfaces. Playground planners should note that the whole play area may not need accessible surfacing. However, an accessible path should be provided to the equipment and accessibility should be made so that play opportunities are given to all children.

Accessible paths should be 60" wide, slip resistant and have a slope no greater than 1:12. Transfer stations on playground equipment and parking areas for wheelchairs are good ideas to improve accessibility.

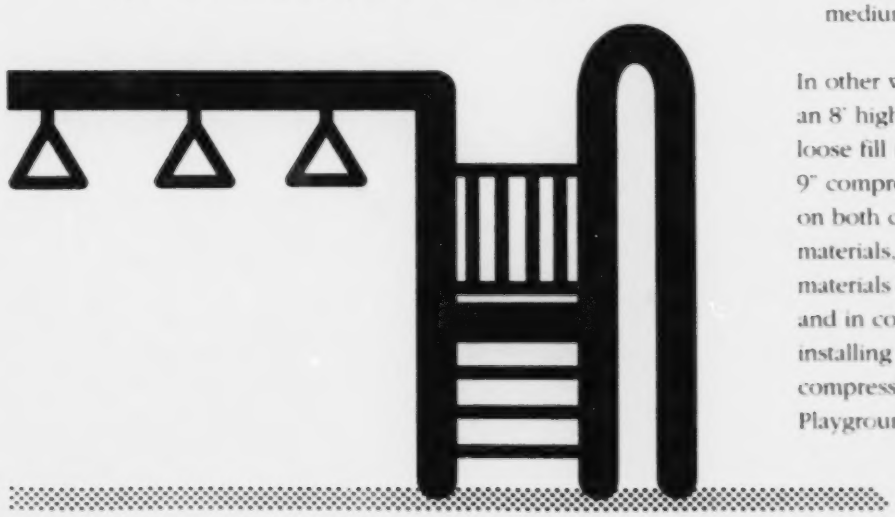
How to determine how much loose-fill surfacing is needed.

This information is based on CPSC critical height testing. The National Program for Playground Safety recommends that in general 12" of uncompressed loose-fill material be used for equipment up to 8' in height.

9" of compressed (material listed) will adequately provide safety for equipment with critical heights up to:

wood chips /10'
double shredded bark /7'
engineered wood fiber /6'
fine sand/5'
coarse sand/4'
fine(pea) gravel/6'
medium gravel/5'

In other words, if you have equipment that has an 8' high slide, wood chips would be the only loose fill material considered safe at a depth of 9" compressed. Although testing has been done on both compressed and uncompressed materials, please remember that all loose materials compact, especially in high-usage areas and in cold and wet weather. Thus, when installing loose-fill materials allow for compression. All this will help Keep America's Playgrounds Safe.



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For general information on playground safety, contact:
National Program for Playground Safety
School of HPELS
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0618
800-554-PLAY
e-mail: playground-safety@uni.edu
http://www.uni.edu/playground

For books on playground safety, audit forms and information on playground inspection certification classes, contact:
National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)
22377 Belmont Ridge Road
Ashburn, VA 20148-4501
800-626-6772
http://www.nrpa.org

*All statistics are based on data obtained from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). NEISS collects only playground product-related injuries that are recorded in more than 90 hospital emergency departments located throughout the U.S. Thus, only emergency room injuries are recorded, and the national statistics are estimates. This information was compiled by the National Program for Playground Safety, University of Northern Iowa (1996, statistics submitted for publication).

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E

Equipment should be

maintenance suggestions for keeping your children safer on public playgrounds

The National Program for Playground Safety

America's playgrounds
Make them safe

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"If you build it, they will come."

In many communities the public playground has become the *Field of Dreams* — a place where children can run, play and fantasize. But once that special place has been built, the community needs to remember that its playground heaven needs to be maintained.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) statistics, more than 200,000 children are treated in emergency rooms each year for playground-related injuries.* About 150,000 of those injuries occur on public playgrounds.

The National Program for Playground Safety highly recommends that parents become proactive in helping maintain public playgrounds. *Although all adults and parents are not expected to be trained playground inspectors, they can visually inspect the playground for safety problems and make sure that children do not play on any unsafe equipment.*

What should a safe playground look like?

Your first visual impression of a playground is important. Does it look safe and well maintained? Ask yourself these questions. 1. Do fences, hedges or open spaces prevent children from running into traffic or parking areas? 2. Are there any broken pieces of equipment such as broken swing seats or teeter-totters? 3. Does the playground have adequate cushioned surfacing such as wood chips, pea gravel, sand or commercially-made products such as rubber tiles or mats? Remember, asphalt, cement, dirt and grass are not adequate surfaces and should not be used in the fall zone under or around equipment. 4. Is there trash such as broken bottles or can tops lying around that could cause injuries?

If you spot problems that you can remedy yourself, like picking up trash, go ahead and correct the problem. If you observe other safety problems like broken equipment, you need to contact the person or department in charge of the area and asked that it be fixed. Don't try to fix equipment yourself. A judgment call may need to be made — could the broken equipment cause a life-threatening situation? If so, you may need to ask to have that piece of equipment taken down or barricaded until it can be fixed. To report a product hazard or a product-related injury, call the department in charge of the area and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) at 800-638-2772.

What types of routine maintenance should be taking place?

Maintenance routines should be determined for each specific playground. Public agencies should establish maintenance plans based on manufacturer's recommendations and CPSC guidelines. Inspections and maintenance routines generally are based on the types of equipment, surfacing, and usage.

In general, park and recreation departments, community groups and schools maintain and inspect their playgrounds on a regular basis. You may want to ask for an inspection update on your favorite playground to get a better idea of how and what the maintenance personnel assess.

Some items need to be checked regularly, maybe even weekly. These items include:

1. The depth of loose-fill cushioned surfacing such as wood chips or pea gravel that may have been displaced because of use. A good guideline is 12" of loose-fill surfacing should be placed under and around the playground equipment where children can fall.

Accessibility paths such as rubber mats or poured-in-place surfaces need to be swept to remove debris such as sand, dirt or any loose-fill surfaces that may have been displaced from adjacent areas.

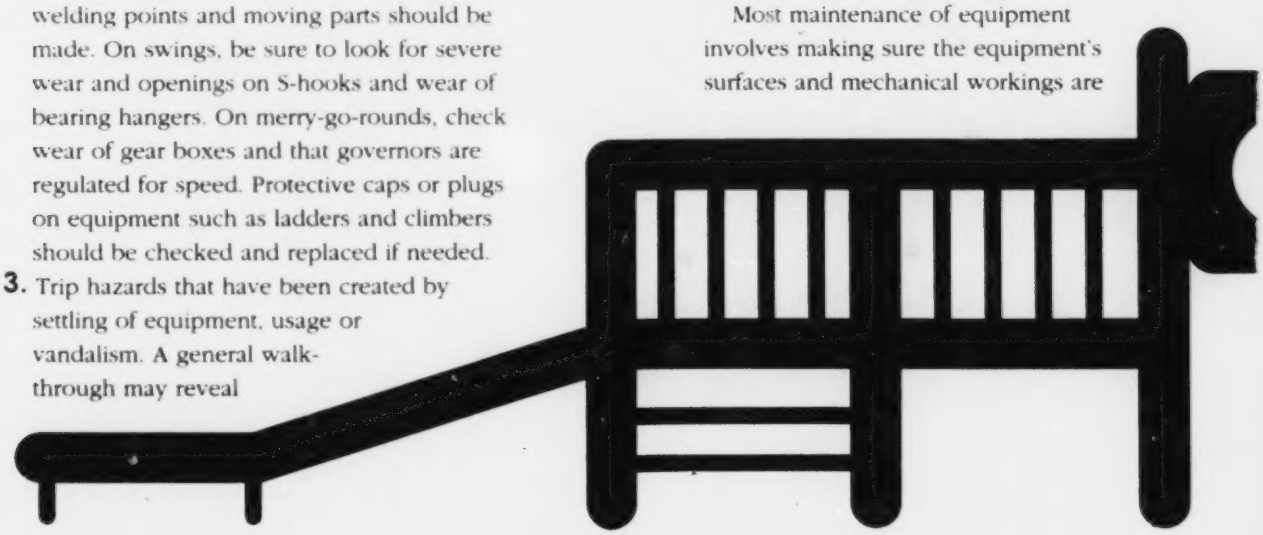
2. Trash that has been tossed in and around the playground. Look for protruding glass, can lids, sharp rocks, metal and other items.
3. Damage to equipment. Vandalism and high usage can cause hazards like broken or missing handrails, guardrails, steps or signs.

Other items need to be checked on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. These items include:

1. Compaction or deterioration of loose-fill surfacing materials such as wood chips, pea gravel or sand. Loads of additional materials may be needed to provide adequate cushioned surfacing. A good guideline is that 12-inches of loose-fill materials should be used for equipment up to 8 feet in height.
2. Equipment that is broken or has loose, worn or missing parts. All parts, even plastic, can break. Check for sharp points, corners or edges. An upclose inspection of bolts, welding points and moving parts should be made. On swings, be sure to look for severe wear and openings on S-hooks and wear of bearing hangers. On merry-go-rounds, check wear of gear boxes and that governors are regulated for speed. Protective caps or plugs on equipment such as ladders and climbers should be checked and replaced if needed.
3. Trip hazards that have been created by settling of equipment, usage or vandalism. A general walk-through may reveal exposed concrete footings or anchoring devices, rocks, roots or uneven surfacing materials.
4. Wooden equipment that has splinters, large cracks or deterioration. A wood preservative, applied once a year, will help protect from deterioration. Preservatives should meet both CPSC guidelines and American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM) standards.
5. Metal equipment and pieces that may have rust or deterioration. Metal equipment may need to be repainted periodically. All paints and other similar finishes should have no more than 0.06% lead by dry weight. Playground equipment that was purchased prior to 1978 may need testing for lead paint unless the manufacturer documents that non-lead paint was used.
6. Proper drainage in the playground area. Water should not collect under or near equipment, especially under slide and swing areas, where ice could form and cause falls.

What other safety measures should be checked on a regular basis?

Most maintenance of equipment involves making sure the equipment's surfaces and mechanical workings are

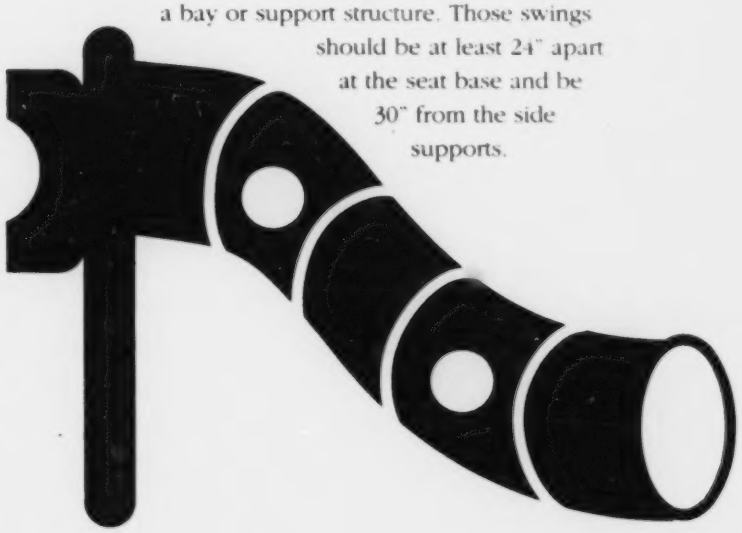


safe. However, other aspects need to be considered.

The National Program for Playground Safety recommends compliance with CPSC playground safety guidelines in its *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*. Playgrounds, whether they are old, recently installed or a just a few years old, need to be inspected. Manufacturer's recalls, warnings or updates should be observed. CPSC warnings should be taken into consideration.

Other general safety points include:

1. No openings on playground equipment should be more than 3 - 1 2 inches or less than 9 inches where children's heads or bodies could be trapped.
2. There should be no v-shaped openings or open areas close to the top of slides where strings or ropes could get caught and cause strangulation.
3. Cushioned surfaces should be placed in the fall zone for play equipment. Asphalt, cement, dirt, grass and large rocks are not appropriate surfaces. Nearly 70 percent of all playground injuries are related to falls to the surface.
4. There should be no more than two swings in a bay or support structure. Those swings should be at least 24" apart at the seat base and be 30" from the side supports.



5. All S-hooks should be closed. Mechanisms on teeter-totters and other equipment where fingers could get pinched should be closed.
6. All hard animal swings that could ram into a child should be removed.

By being aware of these maintenance and general safety tips you can help Make America's Playgrounds Safe.

Resources:

For copies of books and checklists on playground safety, contact:
American Association for Leisure and Recreation (AALR)
1900 Association Dr.
Reston, VA 22091
800-213-7193
http://www.aahperd.org/aalr/aalr.html

To obtain copies of ASTM standards, contact:
American Society for Testing & Materials
100 Barr Harbor Dr.
West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959
610-832-9555
http://www.astm.org/index.html

For a copy of the *Handbook for Public Playground Safety* or to report a product hazard or product-related injury, contact:
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)
Washington, DC, 20207
800-638-2772
http://www.cpsc.gov

Order Form

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Publications			
Working to ...	$10.50		
Inspection Guide	$10.50		
Planning a Play	$10.50		
Fundraising Tips	$10.50		
Blueprint for...	$5.50		
S-A-F-E sets	$25.50		
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Videos			
SAFE Playgrounds	$29.95		
ABC's of Super...	$29.95		
Sammy's Pointers	$29.95		
Safe Surfaces (Spring '99)	$29.95		
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The National Program for Playground Safety reserves the right to limit quantities based on availability. All prices include shipping and handling. Rush orders may require additional shipping fees. Prices subject to change.

Payment due with order. (Please call for purchase order policy.)
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Send check to: National Program for Playground Safety, University of Northern Iowa, School of HPELS, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0618 Phone: (800)554-PLAY Fax: (319)273-7308

The National Program for Playground Safety

America's playgrounds
Make them safe

The National Program for Playground Safety is housed at the University of Northern Iowa. For additional information about playground safety, contact the National Program for Playground Safety at the following addresses:

National Program for Playground Safety
School of Health, Physical Education
and Leisure Services
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0618

800/554-PLAY (7529)
319/273- PLAY (7529)
Fax: 319/273-7308
e-mail: playground-safety@uni.edu

World Wide Web:
http://www.uni.edu/playground

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Safe Playgrounds

Resources from The National Program for Playground Safety

America's playgrounds
Make them safe

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Videos

SAFE Playgrounds
(Running time 15 minutes) Cost: $29.95
An informative video designed to provide an overview of the importance of **S**upervision, **A**ge appropriate design, **F**alls to surfaces and **E**quipment maintenance to playground safety. An excellent educational tool to use in discussing playground safety with professional and community groups.

ABC's of Supervision
(Running time 13 minutes) Cost: $29.95
An effective playground supervisor must know the "ABC's of Supervision" to prevent injuries. When a first year educator arrives at the elementary school, the experienced supervisor shows him the many ways to put "Safety First!". An on-screen narrator reinforces the major points of SAFE playgrounds. A must for people involved in playground supervision and training.

Sammy's Playground Pointers
(Running time 10 minutes) Cost: $29.95
A playground-related injury brings Sammy, the Racoon, to the school nurse's office. As he describes his recess adventures, Nurse Mevers and Frieda, a student playground helper, suggest ways to play safely. Key points include informing kids that equipment is age specific and the importance of telling adults about problems. An excellent educational tool to use with children grades K-3. Educates with music, drama, humor and rhyme. Teaching guide accompanies the video.

Safe Surfaces
(Running time approx. 10 minutes) Cost $29.95
Available Spring 1999
How do you select the proper safety surfacing for your playground? An informative video which outlines criteria you need to consider to ensure that the surfaces under and around equipment are appropriate. Explains the Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines and American Society for Testing and Materials standards in clear and understandable terms. A must for any group considering the replacement of safety surfacing under and around playground equipment.

Video special @ Any two $55.00 Any three $80.00 All four for $100

Brochures

(One copy of each brochure is free.)
($10/50 copies)

Working to Make America's Playgrounds SAFE
($10/50 copies)
A description of the National Program for Playground Safety, program services and available resources.

Inspection Guide for Parents
($10/50 copies) Although all adults and parents are not expected to be trained inspectors of playgrounds, they should visually inspect the playground equipment for safety problems. The brochure outlines ten ways adults can make America's Playgrounds Safe.

Planning a Play Area for Children
($10/50 copies)
The development of an appropriate play area for children takes careful planning. This easy to read guideline outlines 24 steps for planning.

Tips for Playground Fundraising
($10/50 copies)
This brochure is designed to provide some tips for raising money to help provide safe playgrounds for children.

A Blueprint for Increasing Playground Safety
($5/50 copies)
This brochure provides guidelines for the supervision plans for schools and child care centers.

S-A-F-E set includes: ***"S", "A", "F"*** and ***"E"*** brochures
($25/50 sets) ($10/50 copies individual brochures)
Set consists of four individual brochures each describing one aspect of SAFE which contributes to playground safety. The **S**upervision brochure gives tips about how to supervise playgrounds. The **A**ge appropriate brochure outlines what to look for in equipment to promote physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. **F**alls to surface brochure describes the appropriate surfaces for playground and specific guidelines about surface selection. **E**quipment maintenance brochure outlines what a safe playground should look like.

Books/Monographs

The National Action Plan for the Prevention of Playground Injuries
($3.00) 24 pages
The National Action Plan provides a blueprint for playground safety at the national, state and local levels. The plan is divided into four sections describing each element of the SAFE model. Resource guides are provided at the end of each section.

Playground Safety Lesson Plans
($5.00) 11 pages
The five lesson plans designed for K-6 are based on the SAFE principles.

Selected Annotated Bibliography About Public Playground Safety
($19.95) 20 pages
An annotated bibliography prepared as a guide for people seeking information about safe playgrounds in America. Over 100 articles/books published since 1990 are cited.

Safe Playground Handbook
($30.00) Available Spring 1999
An easy to read book outlining important points concerning playground hazards, supervision, age appropriate design, surfacing and equipment maintenance.

Building SAFE Playgrounds
($25.00) Available Summer 1999
A how-to book of planning and designing SAFE playgrounds in a community. Specific sections includes general planning concepts and specific planning steps.

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6. Survey types and quality of swings.

Swings also are favorite equipment that need close observation. They are the pieces of moving equipment that are most likely to cause injuries. For preventative measures, the following changes are suggested: remove animal swings; remove metal or wooden seats and replace with soft seats; make sure swings are on a separate framework rather than attached to other equipment. Only two swings should be placed in each bay (or framework) that supports the swings. Swings should be positioned at least 24" apart at the base of the seats and 30" from any supports.

Swings should have a fall zone that is two-times the height of the pivot or swing hanger in front and in back of the swing seats. For example, if the hanger pivot height is 10 feet, the fall zone must be 20 feet in front and 20 feet in back of the swing seat. The fall zone also should extend six feet to each side of the support structure.

7. Check out the slides.

Slides should be well anchored, have firm handrails for gripping and steps with good traction. Steps should have drainage holes to make them less slippery. There should be no spaces between the slide platform and the slide bed where strings from clothing could catch and cause strangulation. Make sure metal slides are shaded or covered to prevent burns in hot sun.

8. Review the see-saw area.

Make sure that the handles of the see-saw are secure and of a size and design that children can grip easily. Check to see if there is a soft bumper under the bottom of the seat to cushion the hit to the surface and that all pivot points are covered to prevent pinched fingers.

9. Inspect the action of merry-go-rounds.

Merry-go-rounds should be firmly anchored into the ground and have handles for children to grasp easily. The surface under the bed of the merry-go-round should be positioned so that children cannot slide underneath. The gear box should be covered so fingers cannot get caught. Finally, a governor should be attached to control the ultimate speed of the unit.

10. Be a good neighbor

Be sure to leave the area in as good a condition as you found it (or better, if you have spotted problems). Have the children help you redistribute any loose surfacing that may have been pushed aside by play back under swings and the bottom of slides. Close any gates that may be open.

If you have found problems that you have not been able to handle yourself, contact the administrator of the play area to suggest changes and point out problems. If an injury occurred, make sure to contact the administrator of the play area and report the injury, the condition of the play area at the time, and any factors that may have been related to the incident.

To report a product hazard or a product-related injury, write to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207, or call the toll-free hotline at 800-638-2772.

For further information, contact:

National Program for Playground Safety
School of HPELS
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0618

800/554-PLAY (7529)
319/273- PLAY (7529)
Fax: 319/273-7308
e-mail: playground-safety@uni.edu
http://www.uni.edu/playground

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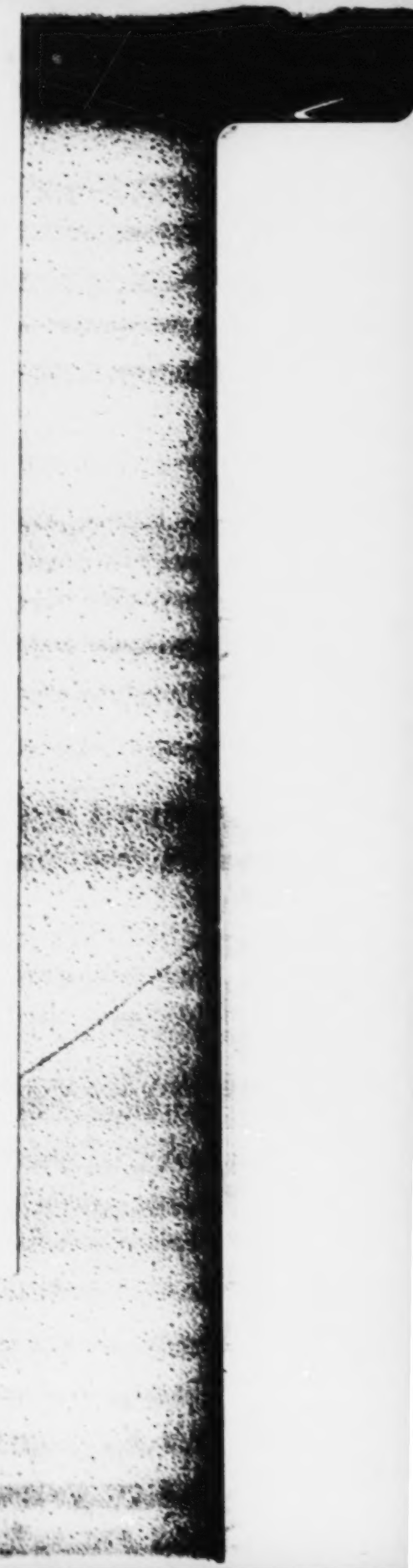
Inspection Guide for Parents

10 steps to safer playgrounds for your children



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The National Program for Playground Safety

America's playgrounds
Make them safe

Going to the playground is a fun-filled, memory-provoking experience for both parents and children. However, there has been a dramatic increase in playground-related injuries over the past two decades. According to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) statistics, it is estimated that nearly 200,000 playground-related injuries requiring emergency room visits are now occurring each year. About 150,000 of those injuries occur on public playgrounds.

Because many injuries are associated with inadequate supervision on playgrounds, the National Program for Playground Safety highly recommends that parents become proactive in playground supervision. *Although all adults and parents are not expected to be trained inspectors of playgrounds, they should visually inspect the equipment for safety problems and make sure that children do not play on any unsafe equipment.*

Here are 10 ways you can make America's Playgrounds safer:

1. **Make sure adult supervision is present at the playground.**

   It is estimated that more than 40 percent of playground injuries may be in some way related to inadequate supervision. Children should always be observed when playing on playground equipment. Adults need to watch for potential hazards, observe children playing, intercede and facilitate play when necessary and be available in case an injury occurs.

2. **Guide children to play on age-appropriate equipment.**

   Children are developmentally different. Therefore, equipment designed for children ages 5 to 12 is too big for children ages 2 to 5. Different playing areas for each of the age groups should be available and children should only play on their age-appropriate equipment.

3. **Survey the play area and make sure it is free of apparent hazards.**

   When visiting a play area, first visually survey the area and check to see that there are no apparent immediate hazards. Hazards range from broken glass or metal pieces lying around to playground design that creates congestion among the play equipment where children could collide or fall on each other. If the area is near a street or parking lot, make sure there is fencing to prevent the children from running in front of cars. Look for signs designating the separate play areas for 2- 5 and 5 -12 year olds. Be sure that metal equipment is in shaded areas or has a protective surface to prevent burns.

4. **Check the playground surface for cushioned surfacing beneath equipment and its fall areas.**

   Falls to surfaces are responsible for more than 70 percent of the injuries sustained on playgrounds. Improper surfacing is the leading cause of many of those injuries. Hard surfaces such as asphalt, blacktop, concrete, grass, packed dirt or rocks should not be used. A fall to those surfaces could be life threatening.

   Acceptable surfaces include hardwood fiber mulch, pea gravel and sand. Other options include synthetic surfaces such as rubber tiles, mats or poured surfaces. Surfaces should be maintained to a depth proportionate to the height of equipment. A good guideline would be to use 12-inches of loose fill, such as mulch, pea gravel or sand, for equipment up to eight-feet in height. Manufacturers of synthetic surfaces should make recommendations of the depth of their products depending on equipment height.

   Loose-fill surfaces may need to be pushed back underneath equipment for adequate cushioning if the material has been moved or pushed to the edge of the play area.

   Cushioned surfacing should be provided under all equipment and its fall zones. Therefore, it should be extended a minimum of six feet in all directions from the perimeter of the equipment.

5. **Examine equipment such as ladders, platforms and steps.**

   Climbers and monkey bars are popular equipment that promote strength and coordination skills. However, they also have the highest incidence of injury on public playgrounds and need to be closely supervised. Check to see if steps on climbers are in good condition and that handrails have appropriate grip sizes for children. If the climber has a platform, it should be surrounded with a guardrail or protective barrier. The choice of protection depends on the age level of children using the equipment and the height of the platform. For platforms for younger children, the guardrails and protective barriers should be at least 29" high; for school-aged children, the barriers should be at least 38" high.

Sources for Help

There are a variety of resources that groups can utilize in their fundraising efforts. These include the local public or college library where fundraising sources are listed. In addition, the National Program for Playground Safety has some suggestions listed on its website (http://www.uni.edu/coe/playgrnd). It is rare to find foundations at the national level which will provide funds for local playgrounds. However, there may be foundations within the state which will provide some funding. Federal or state grants for community development may also be available on a limited basis. In addition, one may find associations who provide funds for children with special needs.

On the local level, businesses with larger corporate ties may have a community involvement program for special projects. The Saturn Corporation is an example of a corporate entity which provides funds in communities where factories and offices are located. Banks, grocery store chains, etc. are examples of other businesses which may have a community donor program. Some local businesses also have matching gifts program. Even if they don't, they may be convinced to help in the fundraising efforts by providing one.

Don't rule out joint partnerships. By pooling resources, local schools and parks may share not only the cost of playgrounds but its use for community children. This is a win-win situation for the community.

Investing in the future

In the final analysis, funding for playgrounds takes committed adults, who are willing to work hard to provide a safe play environment for children. The investment is well worth the price to make America's playgrounds safe!

Additional Resources

The National Program for Playground Safety is part of the College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa. For additional information and resources about playground safety, contact NPPS at the following addresses:

National Program for Playground Safety
School of HPELS
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0618

800-554-PLAY
Fax: 319/273-7308
e-mail: playground-safety@uni.edu
www.uni.edu/playground

The National Program for Playground Safety
America's playgrounds Make them safe

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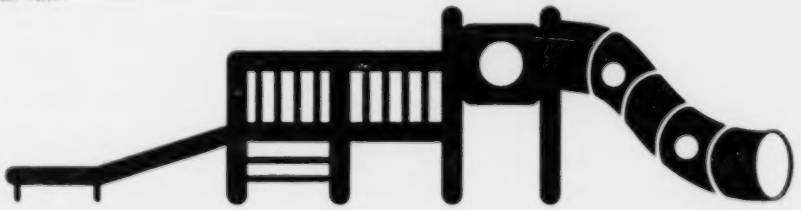

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The National Program for

America's playgrounds

PS 027339

Concerned adults in communities around America are working to make playgrounds safer for children. Many times, this means replacing old, outdated and unsafe equipment. However, the replacement of playground equipment can be a costly enterprise which many groups are unprepared for from a financial standpoint. This brochure is designed to help provide some tips for raising money to help keep America's children safe on playgrounds!

Getting started

Fundraising is a tool. It is a means to bring plans into reality. As such, fundraising activities should begin after the preliminary plans for the playground have been made and a price tag has been established. It is critical that there is a picture or a model of the planned playground. People will give to an idea that is tangible or visible. It is easier to raise money for a swing than a smile.

Making a Plan

Just as one doesn't build a playground without a plan, one cannot raise money without knowing the who, what, where, why, and how of fundraising. Some important points to consider include:

1. Who should serve on the fundraising committee? People will work hard for projects or ideals when they will benefit from the outcome. This benefit can take many forms. For some, it may be that their children will be safe. For others, it may be that community pride will be enhanced. Still for others, it may be the satisfaction that comes from serving others. Whatever the reason, the fundraising group must be made up of committed individuals who are willing to work hard and influence others. It is useful if the committee has individuals who are organized and are clear thinkers. The chair of the committee should be one who is well-known in the community, a good listener, a good organizer, and one who is willing to work. There should also be a secretary/treasurer to keep track of decisions that are made and records that need to be kept. In addition, the chair of the fundraising committee should serve on the original planning committee for the playground in order to understand the decisions that are made by the whole planning group.

2. What should be the focus of the fundraising campaign? Provide a direct link between what you ask for and what it will provide. For instance, instead of asking for money for "the playground" provide categories for givers and items that will be purchased. An example might be $25.00 for X amount of safe surfacing. Use social math in the campaign. This means, putting the price tag in human terms. For instance, a school which has an enrollment of 600 means that a playground costing $50,000.00 will cost approximately $8.00 per child over a ten-year period. Eight dollars is a small "investment" to make in a child's life.

3. Where should fundraising occur? Generally speaking, fundraising for a playground should occur within the community. The community is the stakeholder, rather than any outside corporate group. There is more ownership if the funds for the project can be raised within the boundaries of the community. Forge partnerships with businesses, civic groups and organizations, and other community entities. And, don't forget the children. It is surprising how "pennies for the playground" can add up, not to mention the sense of ownership also given to children who have "contributed" to the project.

4. Why do people give? There are a number of reasons why people give. They include love, hate, fear, shame, guilt, friendship, loyalty and nostalgia. But the most important point is that people will give if they are asked. Spontaneous, unsolicited, significant contributions are as rare as 80 degree weather in Iowa in January. Think about it. When was the last time that you gave for a cause spontaneously? That just doesn't happen often enough to be counted on. But, if your boss, a neighbor, a relative or friend asked you to contribute you probably gave something. Thus, it is important that people be asked to give.

5. How should one fundraise? Successful fundraising is personal. It is the ability to get others committed to your cause. Publicity helps, but in the end, it is people who raise money. Some key points to remember are:

- Give of yourself first. You can't ask others to give if you haven't done so.
- Get individuals in other groups involved.
- Aim your focus on individuals. Individuals account for 90% of all funds donated each year.
- Understand that people are interested in their needs, not yours. Think of your donors as customers in terms of ways you can meet their needs. Use lots of human interest.
- Play to the emotions, not the intellect.
- Translate the funds into human terms. Indicate ways the playground will benefit the donor. Emphasize all the positives.
- Look prospective donors in the eye. The best method is eye-to-eye contact. Be direct.
- Be grateful, even for small gifts. Thankfulness for small amounts may lead to more.
- Ask, but as the last step. The prospect needs to understand the goals of the group, appreciate their importance, and then have the opportunity to invest in the group.

When all is said and done, keep it simple. Ask for money, face to face, from the smallest number of people possible, in the shortest time, at the least expense.

The campaign for the playground should be as short as possible. Its length should be determined by the tolerance of the community. Some communities would prefer to deal with a six-month timeline. Others like to have a one-year period for fundraising. It is rare for a community to endure more than one year, but that time depends on the amount of monies needed to be raised, the number of people in the community, and the length of time that the community will endure requests for a project. The sooner a fundraising project can be concluded, the better.

Planning a Play Area for Children

Developed by: Dr. Donna Thompson, Director, National Program for Playground Safety. University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0618, 800-554-PLAY, http://www.uni.edu/playground

The development of an appropriate play area for children takes careful planning. It is important to listen to various points of view, to consider professional expertise, to observe children's needs, to evaluate the current site, and to work with playground equipment manufacturers or custom designers of play areas.

Planning may take a year or two. Preliminary research and preparation helps pay dividends later.

The following steps have been created to help administrators and/or volunteers for schools, child care centers, or community recreation areas create a logical and comprehensive plan. It is recommended to follow the steps in the order given.

1. **Form a playground committee** of six to 10 people who represent various points of view. For child care centers, include: several teachers, the director, a custodian, board members, parents and playground supervisors. For schools, include: representatives from upper and lower elementary grades; special education and physical education teachers; administrators; support staff such as the nurse, custodian and playground supervisors; parents including a PTA representative, a fund-raising chair and/or project chair. For parks and recreation settings, include: the recreation director, park supervisors, maintenance specialists, park board members, city council representatives and parents. From your group:
   a. Elect a chairperson and secretary.
   b. The secretary should keep notes of the meetings including topics discussed, decisions made, and names of persons attending.

2. **Contact a neutral consultant knowledgeable about playgrounds**. Company representatives or custom designers often have vested interests so it is suggested to work with a neutral consultant. You may obtain consultant names from the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AALR); National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS); or National Recreation Park Association (NRPA). The consultant should attend the initial or second meeting of the planning group. It may be appropriate to pay a fee and/or cover expenses for the consultant. The information the consultant gives should save money over the length of the project.

3. **Obtain written materials on playground safety** (a resource list of addresses is available at the end of this publication) in order to know what guidelines and standards should be met.
   a. Guidelines: United State Consumer

PS 009339

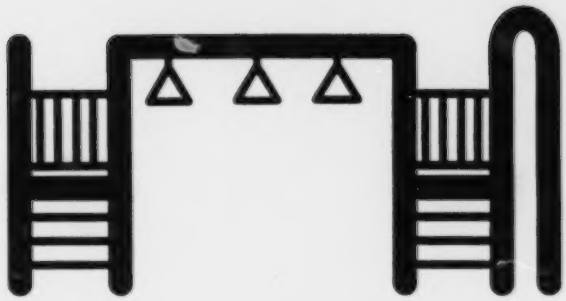
Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Handbook for Public Playground Safety

b. American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM) Standards: F-1487 for Public Use Playgrounds Equipment; and F-1292 for surfacing
c. Books about playground safety (optional)

4. **Determine the developmental needs** of the children for the site. There are three age appropriate areas, 0-2, 2-5, and 5-12, that need to be considered. Decide how the play area will be used: in free play, in physical education, with school classes, during recess or lunch periods, during and after school, in conjunction with sporting events at parks, on weekends, during play supervised by professional staff, aides or parents. Usage will help determine needs and choices.

5. **Remember to plan for children with disabilities**
   a. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), interpretations for playground areas are anticipated in 1998. Remember, all children, disabled and non-disabled, should have access to some playground structures.
   b. Plan to meet future ADA guidelines and current interpretations recommended in ASTM 1487.
   c. Cooperate with schools who may be using area to identify their needs.

6. **Evaluate the current play area** with an assessment form. Use the neutral consultant or a trained or knowledgeable person in the community to perform that duty. As a result of the evaluation, determine:
   a. What to retain and remove
   b. What to fix
   c. What to purchase



7. **Research and decide** how to address the following issues:
   a. Hazard analysis - think about accident causing situations that cannot be seen or perceived by the user and how they can be handled.
   b. Legal issues - check insurance company requirements on equipment; check on insurance when using volunteers to install equipment or supervise children.
   c. Risk management system - determine who will create and file maintenance inspection sheets on a regular basis and where information will be kept.
   d. Supervision - decide training requirements for playground supervisors.

8. **Get suggestions from the children** on the site regarding what kinds of things they would like to do in the area. Those activities can include building, cooperating, planning, running, climbing, socializing, exploring, manipulating, and jumping. Then, ask them what equipment they think would help them be able to do those tasks. Do not ask what equipment they would like to have first. That could prevent good ideas from being generated.

9. **Get suggestions from teachers, supervisors, youth leaders**

10. **Send for at least ten catalogs from playground surface companies** asking for information about shock absorbent surfaces to be placed under permanent equipment. (Lists of potential companies

are available from the NPPS.) All companies should provide evidence that their materials meet the CPSC Guidelines and the ASTM standards, where applicable.

11. **Send for catalogs from at least ten playground equipment companies**. (Lists available from the NPPS.)
    a. Indicate for which age levels equipment is intended
    b. Ask for information about equipment for children who are disabled
    c. Use only equipment that meets CPSC Guidelines and ASTM standards

12. **Form a budget** after the site has been evaluated, children's needs have been assessed, and catalogs have been consulted. A fund raising chair should be included in this discussion. The budget should include the cost of the shock absorbent surface, as well as the equipment, installation and maintenance, and fencing costs.

13. **Make 3-6 goals** that you hope the play area will meet. For example: (a) The play area must have separate areas to accommodate different age groups served. (b) The younger children must have opportunities to manipulate various textures and have space for wheel toys. © Older children must have opportunities to cooperate, climb, explore, and build arm strength. Compile information on your goals, the dimensions of the area, equipment that you already have and intend to retain, pieces from other companies that you want to use. (You do not have to buy all equipment from one company, but you may not attach one company's equipment to another's or it voids the warrantee.)

14. **Send the information to three companies for plans and quotes**. Have the companies send back to you a plan, costs, and rationale regarding ways that their plan meets your goals. Request the vita of the designer for the company. If there is no evidence of knowledge of children noted, consider using another company.

15. **Develop a fund raising plan and schedule**.

16. **Obtain and verify instructions for installation and maintenance** from equipment and surfacing companies.

17. **Work out a payment method**.

18. **Implement a file system to document decisions** that have been made, maintenance work and assessment reports. This may be incorporated with other risk management documents.

19. **Install the equipment**, using company representatives or volunteers.

20. **Train appropriate personnel to maintain and inspect the equipment** according to the manufacturer's instructions.

21. **Instruct supervisors on proper use of equipment** and other supervision tips.

22. **Teach children proper use of new equipment** and review at least once a year.

23. **Plan a celebration** for the planning committee and the fund-raising committee when the project is completed.

24. **Let the children play!**

Resources available:

For publications on school, child care center and park playground safety and injury prevention and/or information about playgrounds for children with disabilities, contact:
American Association for Leisure and Recreation (AALR)
1900 Association Dr.
Reston, VA 22091
800-213-7193
http://www.aahperd.org/aalr/aalr.html

For detailed information on playground site and surface testing standards, including Safety Performance Specification for Playground Equipment for Public Use Standard F 1487-93 and Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment Standard F 12-92-95, contact:
American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM)
100 Barr Harbor Dr.
West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959
610-832-9585
http://www.astm.org/index.html

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For library resources, answers to common questions about playground safety, manufactures lists and other general information about playground safety and injury prevention, contact:
National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS)
School of HPELS
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0618
800-554-PLAY
email: playground-safety@uni.edu
http://www.uni.edu/playground

For information on playground inspection certification classes, playground related publications and inspection tools, contact:
National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA)
2775 S. Quincy St., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22206-2204
800-626-6772
http://www.nrpa.org

For a copy of the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Handbook for Public Playground Safety or to report a product hazard or product-related injury, contact:
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)
Washington, DC 20207
800-638-2772
http://www.cpsc.gov